Debating Disadvantages

Anything that can go wrong will go wrong, no matter how farfetched or unlikely it seems.

I. What is a disadvantage?

A. A harm caused by your opponent’s advocacy.

B. Relies on an external link. Offense, but it doesn’t latch onto a specific link in your opponent’s position.

C. The desirability of any position is affected by explicit and opportunity costs. When we do an act, we stop the best possible mutually exclusive alternate. Also, Affirmatives can trigger bad harms.

II. Structure of DA

A. Uniqueness: What the world looks like in the status quo.

B. Link: The way your opponent’s advocacy revises the status quo.

C. Impact: The significance of that change. Impact comparison is the marginal difference between the status quo level and link level.

D. Link chain: Intermediate steps between the link and the impact.

E. Internal links: Even if an opponent only reads uniqueness, link, and impact, all DAs need internal links to connect links or a link and an impact.

III. Why you should run DAs

A. Put pressure on the 1AR. Bigger arguments with more offense makes the speech more difficult.

B. Offense to fall back on even if you don’t read tremendous turns.

C. Debaters do not do enough research, and running DAs raises the threshold for responses, exposing weakness.

D. DAs will always have an external link and a huge impact if run correctly.

E. DAs set up net benefits for a counter-advocacy.

IV. How to write a DA

A. Structure them in the correct order. Make sure you evidence for each level.

B. Remember Murphy’s Law and how your opponent’s advocacy could cause harm.

C. Evidence for each story in the link chain may not come from one article, but you should aim for that goal.

1. The author sits down to write the entire article, so the argument will be tighter.

2. Tighter link structure makes the DA more credible.

D. Find deep warrants – warrants for warrants. This level of analysis strengthens the DA.

E. Find good evidence.

1. Specificity – DAs are more difficult to address if the evidence is overwhelmingly specific.

2. Credibility – more believable impacts.

3. Vividness – you want quantification of impacts with colorful analysis about why we should care.

4. Consistency – make sure that the rhetoric is very consistent.

F. Think about whether you can take the link chain further to a bigger impact.

V. Types of DAs

A. Brink DAs

1. Uniqueness says that in the status quo, the harm is imminent, and we’re close to the edge.

2. Link says Affirmative pushes us over the edge, causing an impact to happen at once.

B. Linear DAs

1. Harm is non-unique, but the severity increases in the Affirmative world. Many kritiks are linear DAs.

C. Economy and Spending DAs

1. Burns a lot of cash.

2. Leads to recession.

3. Economic collapse.

4. Large scale change with little benefit.

5. Research soft landing if you want to run the DA, but Affirmative

increase in spending causes that to divert.

D. Federalism: Affirmative upsets the strength of the US government, thus affecting other governments who mimic us.

E. Relations DA: Alliances die causing big impacts like war.

F. Politics DA

1. Because of Fiat, Negative loses their game-over strategy that the resolution is unlikely, but then Negative gains the Politics DA to examine affects on the political situation. Ask your opponent why the Affirmative advocacy has not happened yet.

2. Why run the argument?

a. Big impact

b. Strong link

c. Education: you learn a lot about politics in the status quo

3. Types of Politics DAs

a. Political Capital: policy crushes Obama’s political capital, meaning he cannot pass a good policy.

b. Public Popularity: key to passing other good agenda.

c. Winners Win: Affirmative is a huge win for Obama, allowing him to ride popularity and capital to passing a bad agenda.

d. Bipartisanship DAs: Affirming causes in-fighting.

e. Focus DAs: passing draws Obama’s focus from a big issue in the world.

VI. Answering a DA

A. Types of answers:

1. Offense

a. Link turn: most direct way to destroy the position. Control uniqueness by reversing their initial claim. Then, run the link turn, which reverses the link. Always concede the terminal impact of the DA if you want to run link turns. Also, say the terminal impact outweighs every possible impact in the debate. Winning a link turn gains you exclusive access to the impact and denies your opponent the impact

b. Impact turn: Except in rare circumstances, impact turning is not a good strategy.

i. If you have a weird judge who likes impact turns, adapt.

ii. If your opponent just assumes that their impact is bad, exploit that assumption.

iii. When a link chain ends prematurely (an internal link is their terminal impact), you have access to flip the internal link.

iv. Impact turning is especially good when paired with a critical position because DAs usually rely on a non-critical framework.

v. Except uniqueness, every link, and every internal link until the terminal impact.

vi. Avoid the double-turn.

c. Internal link turn

i. Direct: Reverses internal link directly.

ii. Indirect: Graft a new internal link into the link chain and compare the two internal links. Claim that your new internal link solves for their impact. Timeframe analysis is crucial. You must compare the internal links and explain why yours outweighs. Read multiple warrants for your new internal link for why it’s true. Read defense on your opponent’s internal link. Avoid the double-turn (link and internal link).

2. Defense

a. No defense is terminal because there’s always some chance that the event will occur.

b. Aim for the top of the link chain with the defense. Given the size of impacts in a DA will be suicide because impacts of internal links will still be substantial.

c. Avoid generic risk skepticism analytics. Dolley (*Wake Forest Research Guide*), Sunstein, and *Journal of Risk Analysis* write about proper analysis.

d. Uniqueness overwhelms the link: The barrier to the revision in the status quo is stronger than the revision itself. If Affirming doesn’t sufficiently change the status quo, then the marginal change is not large enough to cause the impact. (Make sure that when you run a DA, your uniqueness evidence isn’t too good. It should only mention the barrier that the link will change.)

e. Inevitability: The link is inevitable. If the impact will happen in both worlds, then any impact is non-unique. Also, the impact is marginal, so no change causes zero impact.

f. Uniqueness presses should take place at every link of the chain.

g. Mitigation: The link will probably not occur. Look for scenario assumptions in the impact evidence. Many authors writing evidence will pre-suppose that many things have happened. Responsibly address weighing analysis.

B. Research

1. DAs are highly based on research, so you must cut good cards to answer the DA. You must read evidence in the 1AR or the evidence in the 1NR and 2NR will crush you. You cannot generate good offensive arguments against a DA without evidence.

2. Pre-empt and react. Before you cut links for your DA, you need to cut the link turn in case somebody else runs the DA.

3. Every DA is essentially its own topic area, so you must separate the DAs and emphasize each one independently. Each DA warrants its own block file.

4. There are several distinct research strategies for different argumentation strategies.

a. Link turns: Research recent news for uniqueness and fairly recent topic literature for the actual turn.

b. Internal link turns: Research news areas for more specific evidence rather than topic literature bases. Also, check out advocacy group websites.

c. Impact turns: Research Project MUSE for kritikal research and ideas.

C. Positional Refutation

1. Commit to a strategy in the 1AR. The shotgun approach will inevitably cause a double-turn and dilute quality answers. Spend substantial time on the DA in the 1AR, or Negative will exploit the 2:1 time ratio.

VII. Extending a DA

A. Read extension evidence rather than speaking prettily. The cards increase the chance of the Affirmative not covering the card.

B. Begin with the voting issue tagline (explain the general idea of the DA, reference the DA clearly on the flow, extend the warrants, answer ink at every level, impact the argument to a standard – reframe your opponent’s standard as a broad consequentialist standard, weigh the terminal impact against all other impacts in the debate, pre-empt the 2AR – say that the 2AR will say this and then explain why that is insufficient), give a link story overview, constantly update the judge with what is happening, and end with a dominant underview. Remember, a risk of a massive impact is still a fairly huge risk.

C. Point out the lack of offense against the DA. Accuse the 1AR of making a huge mistake.

VIII. Topic Specific Ideas to Research

A. Relations DAs

1. If a HIPC has a strong relationship with a developed country, what issues would the relationship cause post-repudiation? Would repudiation harm a benevolent alliance?

B. International Politics DAs

1. Affirmative would never occur on this topic because of the widespread ramifications of this topic. Why?

2. Focus DAs: District from peace negotiations.

3. Detract from loans from IMF and WBO.

4. Domestic State Politics DAs: Repudiation would significantly strengthen the power of leftist group in developed nations. Leftist groups have done many bad things. Cut specific evidence for why leftism is bad.

5. Specific Country DAs

a. Sudan, Uganda, Congo, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Rwanda, Kenya, Myanmar, Vietnam, Afghanistan.

b. There is good evidence that says Obama is neglecting Africa. Repudiation in African countries could be critical.

C. On the Negative, make some sort of topicality argument to defend full repudiation by

HIPCs.

IX. Conclusion

A. DAs are all about the impact.

B. Apply these techniques to any argument that concludes there is a harm to one side. An argument is an argument. All arguments with impacts are reasons why your side is good, and their side is bad.